United Nations E/2016/SR.9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 March 2016

Original: English

2016 session
24 July 2015-27 July 2016
Operational activities for development segment

Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 22 February 2016, at 10 a.m

President: Mr. Palma Cerna (Vice-President) ..... (Honduras)

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16-02686 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Mr. Palma Cerna (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the segment

1. **The President**, opening the operational activities for development segment, said that the overarching objectives of that segment in the current session were to review progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and to discuss the implications of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the United Nations development system.

2. Member States recognized that the United Nations development system was at a turning point and that significant changes would be required in order to enable the United Nations to respond effectively to the mandate for integration contained in the 2030 Agenda. They also acknowledged that the call for institutional renewal of the United Nations development system should be based on earlier reform initiatives but should also go beyond them in order to become transformational in nature, which would require strong and sustained leadership by the Member States themselves. The second phase of the Council's dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system would be a key driver in building such momentum. In that connection, the Bureau had recently established an independent team of advisers charged with providing Member States with concrete proposals and options for strengthening the United Nations development system in response to the requirements of the 2030 Agenda.

3. The next quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution would be critical, as it would lay the foundations for operational activities for development during the first years of efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the review must reflect the essence and spirit of the universal, integrated, indivisible and broad-based 2030 Agenda. It might need to be redesigned in terms of its name, content, strength and applicability, as well as how it was monitored. It would be important to ask whether the review was truly comprehensive and coherent, reflected the priorities needed to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, provided leadership, strategy and vision for the United Nations development system, promoted a comprehensive approach within the system, had the power to fulfil its mandate and could depend on adequate monitoring, follow-up and review mechanisms. Another question was whether the United Nations development system, Governments and strategic partners could easily understand, address, implement and monitor the review.

4. As it entered the implementation phase of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations system had an opportunity to gauge whether it had the right instruments to steer the course ahead. Gradual change would not suffice; its belief in and commitment to the Agenda would be measured by the extent of its transformation. The time had come to lay solid foundations for guiding, monitoring and assessing operational activities for development and to adopt a new mentality concerning the way the system operated in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was not enough to encourage, exhort and urge; it was now time for decisions and action.

5. **Mr. Lykketoft** (Observer for Denmark), President of the General Assembly, said that, following the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, Governments must now develop national plans, undertake institutional changes and deliver the development assistance and support needed to implement the agreements. However, Governments could not succeed alone; the private sector, civil society, the international finance industry, the scientific community and others also had an important role to play, as did the United Nations. Since September 2015, a series of positive steps had been taken by the Organization to assist countries with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and support accountability for the grand promises made, including the preparation of the Sustainable Development Goals global indicator framework and the development of the technology facilitation mechanism. Over coming months, Member States would look to optimize the global follow-up and review processes and to ensure coherence and non-duplication across the work of the General Assembly's committees and the Economic and Social Council.

6. The United Nations development system had a crucial role to play in terms of implementation of the

new Agenda, particularly in developing countries, especially the most vulnerable. To do so effectively, it must adapt to the core features of the Agenda and to the needs of its core partners. In the light of the Agenda's focus on all three dimensions of sustainable development, the level of its ambition, the pledge that no one would be left behind, the alignment with human rights, and the focus on national ownership, mutual accountability and multi-stakeholder partnerships, there needed to be a review of, and, if necessary, a shift in, the modus operandi for all United Nations agencies and the system as a whole. The different entities of the United Nations development system, and entities across all three pillars of the United Nations system in general, needed to work together effectively, efficiently and coherently. Through the Council's dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system and the subsequent intergovernmental consultations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, Member States had already set in motion the process to support that endeavour. The onus was now on Member States to give guidance to the system on how they wished it to work, what kind of support programme countries required and whether there was a need to make institutional changes. Discussions during the current segment provided an opportunity to further develop thinking in that area. In addition, within the United Nations development system itself, entities would have to adapt and demonstrate their relevance in the new sustainable development era. The internal work of the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had shown progress in that regard, in terms of institutional arrangements, working methods and substantial support. He encouraged them to continue their work and keep Member States informed of their progress. However, in view of the pressing challenges that faced the international community, it was important not to become caught up in internal or intergovernmental processes, but to work together with haste in order to ensure that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals got off to the best possible start.

7. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the adoption of three landmark agreements in 2015 would significantly affect the work of the United Nations development system. In addition, the Organization's broader operating environment was continuously changing, including in relation to the needs of developing countries and the role of development actors. The operational activities for development segment, the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review were therefore taking place at an opportune time, and the Council's deliberations would be critical in charting a new course for the work of the Organization for development in the post-2015 era. Bold and imaginative decision-making by Member States would be required in order to achieve that objective.

8. The 2030 Agenda marked a step change in international cooperation for development. The substantive scope of the 2030 Agenda and the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and targets meant that an integrated and coordinated approach to the implementation process would be needed, which would undoubtedly have implications for funding and governance of the United Nations development system, as well as for its capacity and impact, partnership approaches and organizational arrangements The results, impact and cost-effectiveness of development activities could be increased considerably if implemented in a coordinated fashion.

9. In least developed countries, land-locked developing countries, small island developing States and conflict-affected countries, the United Nations development system would need to provide effective solutions adapted to different country contexts. The middle-income countries were also increasingly facing complex development challenges, which would require targeted international support. In countries facing protracted crises, it would be especially important to strengthen the linkages between the development, humanitarian and peace and security pillars of the Organization.

10. In its discussions during the current segment, the Council should bear in mind that, while the United Nations development system remained a preferred partner for programme countries, a much more horizontal and unified approach would be needed to deliver on the expectations of the 2030 Agenda than had been the case with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The system would therefore have to move from mere coordination and cooperation to a fully integrated approach. The effective adaptation of the United Nations development system to the major

ongoing changes in the purpose and modus operandi of international cooperation would require a collective response by all system entities and a considerable change in mindset, method and action. In that regard, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review must serve as an instrument that strategically, effectively and efficiently furthered the objective of system-wide coherence in the United Nations development system in the post-2015 era.

11. **Mr. Gatete** (Rwanda), Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, delivering the keynote address, said that Rwanda had achieved all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in some cases exceeding the targets, thanks to strong national ownership and visionary leadership, the institutionalization of a results-based management culture, the nurturing of home-grown citizen-centred innovations, effective monitoring mechanisms, institutionalized accountability and strengthened institutional and individual capacities. The United Nations development system had contributed in many ways to the progress made in achieving the MDGs. Rwanda had been among the first eight countries to pilot the "Delivering as one" approach and had consistently emphasized the message of "no turning back to business as usual". Particularly strong progress had been made in joint planning across agencies and with the Government. The United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) was fully aligned with the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy of Rwanda. Numerous measurable reforms were being undertaken under the leadership and guidance of the "One United Nations" steering committee, including the "one leader" and "one voice" pillars of the "Delivering as one" approach. A business operation plan had also been developed to focus on quantifiable measures to reduce operational costs and allocate more resources to implementation. The Government had earmarked land for the construction of "one United Nations house" in Rwanda, thereby making progress towards the physical establishment of "one office".

12. At the regional and global levels, an in-depth assessment was needed to identify more areas where the United Nations system could harmonize its work to support existing reforms, such as by jointly mobilizing and pooling resources, building human resources and capacity, and leveraging internal expertise and knowledge on such critical issues as malnutrition, disaster preparedness and management, climate change, and peace and security. There needed to be a common understanding of goals, priorities and implementation mechanisms across different United Nations institutions, including those contributing to peace and security, development and humanitarian affairs, especially when dealing with cross-border conflicts that affected entire regions. A comprehensive approach encompassing development assistance, humanitarian aid and peacekeeping must be developed, especially in light of the continued rise of extremist ideologies and conflicts around the world.

13. At the global level, when considering the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, new challenges would need to be addressed, such as the slowdown in the global economy which put strain on development assistance, further highlighting the need for more sustainable funding approaches. A greater emphasis on joint planning and mobilization of resources across shared goals was needed within the United Nations system. More support should also be directed towards building capacity to increase trade and attract investment across regions, while expanding domestic resource mobilization.

14. At the country level, the use of the One United Nations fund facilitated collaboration between the Government and the United Nations country team to prioritize needs for joint programming in the UNDAP; however, the fund's replenishment was having a negative impact on delivery. Pooling resources would help to address the lack of funding for critical areas, reduce fragmentation and increase transparency and accountability. The United Nations country team had made significant progress in reducing internal operational costs, but more needed to be done to reduce transaction costs through increased use of country systems, including for project management, financial management and procurement. Change at that level had to be initiated at the global level in order to be effective at the national level. Lastly, the support provided to countries for their national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals was critical to their success. Rwanda was closely working with the United Nations country team to address the needs and gaps it had initially identified, including the provision of mass communication locally to all stakeholders, review of the national statistical framework to capture new indicators and revision of long-term development strategies to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals. Harmonization and coordination across United

Nations agencies in their work to support countries in the domestic implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals would further strengthen that exercise and facilitate the sharing of best practices.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation

(a) Follow-up to the policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (A/71/63-E/2016/8)

Panel discussion: "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: What are the implications for policy, programming and operational cooperation and coordination in the United Nations development system?"

15. **Ms. Cliffe** (Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University), moderator, reiterated the importance of integration across the United Nations development system to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda contained some game-changing shifts for development, including the fact that all the goals and targets would require work across sectors, which represented a particular challenge for the United Nations development system.

16. **Ms. Aitzhanova** (Minister of Economic Integration, Kazakhstan), panellist, said that United Nations operational activities for development had a crucial role to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which added new urgency to enhancing coordination of the activities of United Nations agencies in the field. Recalling her Government's proposal at the seventieth session of the General Assembly that each country should contribute 1 per cent of its defence budget to a special fund for the Sustainable Development Goals, she said that all 17 Goals were priorities in the countries where the United Nations was working and beneficiary Governments should incorporate them into their long- and short-term strategies. Within each country, concrete implementation mechanisms must be developed, through policy advice, technical assistance and capacity- and institution-building activities, which would bring value added to the work of the United Nations in country offices. From the perspective of beneficiary countries, it did not matter which United Nations agency was providing assistance; what mattered was that the policy advice and technical assistance was relevant and tailored to the country's priorities and strategies, since each country faced its own unique challenges.

17. At the global level, the United Nations could enhance its work on initiatives on universal issues, such as climate change, HIV/AIDS, Ebola and crisis prevention, taking into account present realities. In the current globalized world, it was also vital to enhance its work at the regional level in order to sustain development in each country. It would be impossible for any country to achieve sustainable development on a stand-alone basis without the promotion and enhancement of regional cross-border cooperation on infrastructure, trade facilitation issues and economic integration.

18. At the country level, Governments needed relevant policy advice on issues where they lacked knowledge and expertise. For example, her Government had asked the World Bank to provide relevant technical expertise on policy issues in the context of cooperation on a joint research programme; in that connection, practitioners from other countries had shared advice and best practices from their own national experience. Furthermore, programmes should not be developed at Headquarters but in the country concerned and should be focused on that country's specific needs.

19. United Nations agencies needed to enhance coordination and avoid duplication of work among themselves. The projects and programmes they implemented must be focused, rather than encompassing too many issues, in order to enable the units responsible for coordinating foreign development assistance in beneficiary countries to take charge of them. Owing to the shortage of financing for development programmes and projects, it was important to avoid competition among agencies for sources of funding. Each United Nations agency should bring its value added and comparative advantage to the work it was undertaking at the country level.

20. Flexibility and speed in the delivery of policy advice by the United Nations was very important. Governments, civil society or the private sector sometimes required immediate assistance or assistance outside of programmes and projects on important issues. Kazakhstan, for example, needed assistance with the diversification of its economy, which was currently dependent on exports of major raw materials

and natural resources and was therefore vulnerable to external shocks and price fluctuations in the global commodities market. Diversification of the economy and development of other sectors had thus become priorities.

21. **Mr. Kamau** (Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations), panellist, said that having the entire United Nations system and all nations working for the first time in history on a single development agenda and measuring progress against one indicator framework posed a huge challenge, the deep institutional and programmatic implications of which were yet to be fully understood. A number of significant questions remained to be answered. It would be important, for example, to consider how the United Nations would bring all its country programmes into line with the 2030 Agenda, and how and when would staff be trained to reorient themselves to the Agenda. It should also be asked how the United Nations could transform its way of doing business in the relatively short 15-year period over which the hugely ambitious 2030 Agenda was to be achieved. Would the existing "Delivering as one" approach and the country-led multi-organizational coordination systems work for the new Agenda? Would the programming and operational instruments that were already straining to deliver the old programme be able to meet the challenges of the new one? Could the 2030 Agenda be delivered by the same United Nations resident coordinator system and the same United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) system, given that it covered areas, such as trade, in which the United Nations resident coordinator system had not traditionally worked. The key question was whether the existing institutions could simply be "rebooted", using the existing framework, or whether new institutions and mandates might in fact be needed. It would be difficult politically, as well as expensive and time-consuming, to revamp institutions, especially with the short time available to deliver on the 2030 Agenda; however, "business as usual" was not credible. The United Nations system and Member States needed to be open to the possibility that some institutions, programmes and operational practices might change radically, while others might become redundant in the new development paradigm. Over the past 50 years, huge corporations had disappeared owing to changes in market supply and demand, which was not considered unusual, whereas in the United Nations system, institutions never disappeared, even when they might no longer be useful.

22. Policy integration based on the three sustainable development dimensions must become part of how business was done going forward. A new operational standard must be established that fully integrated economic, social and environmental aspects and recognized the need to incorporate the issues of trade and data into that process as well. At the global, regional and country levels, the United Nations must function as an integrated and coherent system. The transformative, universal, rights-based and integrated 2030 Agenda required a transformative and transformed United Nations development system.

23. As part of the ongoing dialogue on United Nations reform, United Nations support should become more strategic, having a longer-term perspective and being fully aligned with beneficiary countries' own development priorities. The United Nations system needed to develop stronger capacities to pool knowledge, resources and expertise for cross-sectoral collaboration. Fostering experimentation and innovation would also be important. In order to meet its increasingly complex mandates and the greater demands being placed on it, the United Nations system must look for innovative ways to diversify and increase sources of funding.

24. Kenya faced a range of humanitarian challenges, including recurrent droughts, a perennial refugee and migrant crisis, disease outbreaks and intercommunal conflicts over resources, which were compounded by climate change, environmental degradation, globalization and technological penetration. Those challenges would require special attention across the United Nations system.

25. **Mr. Clos** (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), panellist, said that, given the current state of affairs worldwide, it was reasonable to expect that a large institution like the United Nations should be managed efficiently and to the highest standard. There was clearly a need to improve the current management model. Many internal and external evaluators had recommended that the United Nations system should make its resource delivery more efficient. Although efficiency did not need to be the highest priority in a multilateral political institution, there was certainly room to improve the efficiency of the Organization's

development capabilities, including by avoiding overlapping mandates and working towards delivery as one. It was time to go beyond simply acknowledging that there was a need to change and begin dialogue on how to implement that change and produce a better functioning organization. The 2030 Agenda provided a good opportunity to do so.

26. There was no need to reinvent the wheel. The Organization could draw on the considerable knowledge already built up by the business sector with regard to improving efficiency. Bearing in mind that the United Nations system was composed of many different entities, some of which had existed since the founding of the Organization, mandates often overlapped and were sometimes interpreted to cover areas of intervention that in fact fell outside the scope of a given entity. As a result, many inter-agency coordination meetings had to be held; such coordination was time-consuming and costly, especially because it required the involvement of senior staff. Moreover, the number of coordination meetings held and the time spent on coordination had never been measured.

27. Reorganization and reform of entities and their mandates was clearly needed, and could be achieved through the implementation of a matrix organization structure, as had been successfully applied in the private sector to complex organizations, such as armies and large international corporations. Under such a model, specific teams could be organized to tackle problems efficiently. However, applying that model to the United Nations would require a revision of its organizational hierarchy. In a typical matrix organization, teams that included senior staff members were often led by lower-level staff, depending on the problem at hand. Therefore, such modernization represented a challenge to the current hierarchy of the United Nations system and would require the Organization to become more flexible. In the private sector, flexibility was considered a value, whereas in a highly hierarchical organization like the United Nations, it was seen as an exception. Managers had to preserve a high level of neutrality and relinquish previous assignments upon entering a matrix organization; otherwise there would be a high risk of conflicts of interest and power.

28. Member States must now take the political decision to advance the modernization of the Organization, applying the many well-tested tools available, and must not become entangled in micromanagement, which would delay the implementation of change and make it more costly and difficult. Some implementation tools were already available, including the Umoja enterprise resource planning system.

29. **Ms. Cliffe** (Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University), noting that the United Nations development system comprised more than 30 different entities, said that the structure had made a great deal of sense at the time those entities had been established. If the entities were being created now the structure would probably be different, but it was very difficult to dismantle existing structures and the entities instead needed to work together and adapt to the new Agenda.

30. **Mr. Noudéhou** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in China), panellist, said that the 2030 Agenda could be achieved only through national ownership and with the United Nations development system offering tailored support that was adapted to each context. The system must work with national capacities and be responsive to national priorities, and should adopt a differentiated approach in providing support.

31. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals would take different forms depending on settings but, in general, close attention would be paid to national strategy planning and fostering innovation to accelerate results; building partnerships to finance the Goals; strengthening national resilience to shocks; and determining which results to monitor and ways to measure progress. To provide effective collective assistance to achieve the Goals, the United Nations development system needed to be capable, responsive and agile at the country level. To that end, country teams should have the flexibility to work with host Governments to establish UNDAFs or similar instruments that were adapted to local contexts. In China, a new UNDAF had been signed with the Government following an extensive repositioning of the United Nations system to ensure that it was fit to meet expectations. The Framework was in line with the national five-year plan and focused on poverty reduction and equitable development, improved and sustainable environment, and enhanced global engagement. In addition, the Framework specified the key means of engagement for the United Nations,

taking into account its comparative advantages and the availability of other development capacities in the country. The next generation of UNDAFs should therefore be differentiated in both structure and content to reflect local expectations.

32. Given the scope of the 2030 Agenda and the links between the Goals, the United Nations needed to ensure greater integration of its efforts at the country level through joint planning of humanitarian work, support for peace and security and development activities. In addition, even in settings where work was concentrated under one pillar, the support provided should be well integrated and the development system should draw on expertise and inputs from all entities. However, comprehensive action could be achieved only if country teams were provided with appropriate resources at the country level. As a result, there was a strong need for adequate and predictable core funding. The support of Member States was needed to provide the Organization with the critical means that it needed to function effectively. In particular, pooled funding mechanisms that were accessible by the country team could foster integrated work and reduce competition for funding among agencies. Funding support for the resident coordinator system was especially critical as greater integration at country level would require more coordination resources.

33. Most countries were now applying all or some of the elements of the "Delivering as one" initiative that were outlined in the standard operating procedures, which was creating better coherence and national ownership. Those gains must be consolidated through continued implementation of the standard operating procedures, including business operations, to facilitate further operational efficiencies. To achieve greater integration, resident coordinators should be given the appropriate authority to guide coordination at the country level, and innovative measures should be explored to create incentives for closer cooperation among country team members. Accountability issues needed to be properly addressed and funding windows accessible by country teams for joint work would also be very helpful. Lastly, efforts should be made to ensure coherence and integration at Headquarters level, including implementation of appropriate reforms to harmonize programming and operational policies.

34. **Mr. Gatete** (Rwanda), Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, said that time was of the essence because United Nations reform was not a quick process and the 2030 Agenda covered just 15 years. His Government was working with United Nations agencies and other development partners to determine how to finance the Sustainable Development Goals; a centre was being established in Rwanda to coordinate the Goals and the Cabinet had adopted a timetable. While commendable efforts were being made at the country level by the resident coordinators and country teams, reform must be initiated from the Headquarters level if it was to be successful. Bold changes were needed to eliminate overlapping mandates and duplication within the development system, and a timeframe for the reform was needed.

35. With its declining resources, the Organization would be unable to fund all indicators and all areas and it was therefore vital to define the strategic areas on which the development system should focus, since a scattered United Nations would not deliver results. Moreover, the United Nations was not the only institution that funded development and the United Nations development system should therefore establish partnerships with the World Bank and other development partners to assist countries at the national level. The United Nations had a solid background in capacity-building and should focus on providing assistance in that regard while partnering with investors that specialized in other areas such as trade and investment and the facilitation of free movement and integration. In addition, new ways of mobilizing resources must be found as part of the comprehensive reform needed at the Headquarters level.

36. **Mr. Tatiyapermpoon** (Observer for Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the eradication of poverty in all its forms remained the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for achieving the 2030 Agenda. At the country level, UNDAFs must be aligned with national development plans and strategies, and should take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of social and economic development to ensure national ownership. In addition, agency-specific programming instruments and processes should be harmonized in line with the respective national UNDAFs.

37. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda should be mainstreamed across all United Nations entities to ensure consistency and alignment of their respective activities and mandates with the objectives of the Agenda. In addition, greater efforts were needed to

achieve collaborative procurement and vendor management to ensure coherent service delivery by the United Nations development system. United Nations country teams and operations staff should continue to harmonize business practices in their operational support to national Governments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/226.

38. Promoting national capacity-building in developing countries was a core function of the United Nations development system and all entities should work to improve their effectiveness in building national capacities through greater coordination and harmonization, an emphasis on results-based capacity development and better access to knowledge and information resources at the country and regional levels. The development system needed to ensure stronger coherence in its delivery of services to provide optimum support for developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. That common goal could be achieved only through a collaborative, non-silo approach.

39. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the United Nations development system should assist countries in translating the 2030 Agenda and the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences associated with that Agenda into an integrated development road map that resonated at the regional and national levels. To that end, further clarity was needed on the role of the development system and operational activities for development in relation to the 2030 Agenda. In addition, allocations to core resources should be increased to effectively fund the work of the United Nations development system.

40. The United Nations development system needed to tailor its support to countries based on their specific circumstances and development needs, and countries in special circumstances required focused treatment in line with their priorities. CARICOM agreed with the Group of 77 and China that there was a need for integrated delivery of several programmes, including the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway). For that reason, the updated report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should include further plans for integrated approaches at the country level between United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in line with the 2030 Agenda, and should provide further clarity on the scope of capacity-building support to be made available to Member States, in particular for the purpose of institutional strengthening for implementation, follow-up and review activities relating to the 2030 Agenda, including in the area of data and statistics. In that regard, the CARICOM member States needed specific assistance in developing their data collection capacities to ensure that their indices were correct. Lastly, his delegation sought further information on how UNDAFs could be aligned to address the 2030 Agenda.

41. **Mr. Egli** (Switzerland) said that it did not matter who delivered on the ground; what was important was that targeted policy support was provided in line with national priorities. The 2030 Agenda was a major opportunity to make changes but the reform must be initiated at the Headquarters level. An Organization-wide strategy was needed to guide the United Nations in its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. There should be an overarching framework that would take into account the comparative advantages of the United Nations — including its experience in capacity-building and its power to convene — and would guide how the different agencies operated under the one umbrella. However, time was of the essence and reforms must be initiated promptly and incrementally. One solution could be to introduce an operational lead agency system which would mean that only some major agencies would be operational on the ground and the other technical agencies would delegate their activities to those lead agencies. The lack of ownership needed to be addressed and support should be aligned with national priorities, taking account of input from the Government, civil society and the private sector. Above all, the development system's response must be timely.

42. **Ms. Naeem** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the devastation caused by Cyclone Winston in Fiji had highlighted the vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters and the nexus between development and humanitarian assistance. The 2030 Agenda must be implemented in a coordinated and coherent manner, not only to ensure optimum efficiency but also to reduce the burden on small island developing States and other countries with limited resources. Too many forums, all working without coordination and coherence, led to ineffective

allocation of resources, duplication and ultimately the failure to deliver on commitments made.

43. Coordination at the national level was also vital, and global frameworks must be aligned with national development plans and strategies, taking into account the specific circumstances in each country. In the case of small island developing States, the 2030 Agenda reflected the sustainable development priorities of those States, as outlined in the Samoa Pathway. To ensure institutional coherence, United Nations entities must work in a coordinated manner within countries and at every level through the UNDAFs developed by national Governments in collaboration with the United Nations system.

44. Service delivery in many small island developing States was different to delivery in other countries. Multi-country offices and regional UNDAFs were being tested in those States, but that model clearly required a very different, targeted approach to service delivery and programme coordination. With their small populations, remoteness and high levels of dispersion, small island developing States were in particular need of capacity-building assistance to ensure their long-term development. In addition, much needed financing was often inaccessible to those countries owing to cumbersome and rigid application processes. Lastly, multiple country offices usually had local teams in countries without a physical presence. However, those local teams were often not equipped with the information and training required to work with bureaucratic United Nations systems and that had an adverse impact on service delivery.

45. **Mr. Munir** (Pakistan) said that the United Nations development system had played a commendable role in supporting the efforts of countries to achieve the MDGs and had evolved into a very dynamic, responsive development support system. However, the 2030 Agenda was very complex and it could not be fully implemented through traditional development cooperation. The range of issues covered by the Sustainable Development Goals and their universal nature required strategic thinking, a move away from "business as usual" and a recalibration of the United Nations development system, including the resident coordinator system and the UNDAF.

46. At the global level, the Council's dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review would need to respond to the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda by implementing a comprehensive adjustment of the development system. In addition to institutional and normative reforms, measures were needed to address the decline in core funding and the increasing reliance on non-core funding, since earmarked funding could not guarantee a comprehensive implementation of the Agenda and was bound to leave progress lagging behind on certain goals and targets, especially those more likely to be priorities for developing countries.

47. At the country level, the United Nations development system should complement national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, and emphasis should be placed on poverty eradication and sustained economic growth and development. The programmatic activities of the United Nations must be consistent with national programmatic activities and development priorities. The recalibrated system should strengthen national capacities and the use of national execution mechanisms and local expertise in the implementation of its operational activities. Lastly, the role and function of resident coordinators, including their engagements with development stakeholders and civil society, should continue to be under the leadership of the Government.

48. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that the Sustainable Development Goals were game changers but they would not be achieved through a "business as usual" approach. Instead, a completely new approach was needed and it should be based on greater coordination, improved efficiency and new ways of thinking. National ownership was fundamental and was directly linked with the priorities set by States. In addition, no single agency could automatically assume the leadership role for all Goals. Country teams needed to be more flexible and the idea of a matrix organization was a promising one. It was important to find ways to involve the private sector, civil society and other new actors, and to increase core resources. Lastly, 15 years was not a long time and it was important to establish a clear time frame for the reform of the development system.

49. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Observer for Mexico) said that the United Nations must be a strategic partner for all countries and should contribute to mobilizing external resources and promoting the participation of non-traditional actors in international development cooperation. It should also promote strategic

partnerships between Governments, civil society and the private sector in order to reduce operational costs and allow for innovative solutions to the challenges of international development cooperation.

50. A key mission of the United Nations was to assist Member States in achieving development, but, to have a positive impact, it needed to ensure that resources were used in a coherent, effective and efficient manner. In order to mobilize resources to improve the activities of the United Nations development system it was important to continue promoting South-South cooperation and other forms of cooperation. In addition, the international community should commit to strengthening the technical capacities of country offices to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To offer comprehensive support to country programmes in the post-2015 era, the United Nations development system should work to eliminate any overlap between functions and mandates to avoid duplication of activities, efforts and resources.

51. The United Nations system must help countries to ensure comparability by building capacities and promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices. It would thus contribute to ensuring shared results at the country level and the establishment of agreed guidelines to facilitate comparisons throughout the country and the monitoring of overall progress. Follow-up frameworks should be established to facilitate the sharing of information. Lastly, the United Nations development system should seek platforms and processes at the regional and global levels and should coordinate the integration of its results both technically and politically. Regional processes outside the United Nations should also be taken into account and made more coherent, while other actors should be included in decision-making.

52. **Ms. Requeira** (Observer for Cuba) said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was of great importance to developing countries. It was also important to continue working at the national, regional and international levels to ensure effective follow-up of the commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The outcomes of the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up and the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals were equally crucial and would be incorporated into the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Her delegation urged all States to commit to those processes.

53. Financing for development did not concern only developing countries; the universal Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda would be achieved through an effective global partnership for sustainable development. However, global development strategies must take into account the specificities and unique challenges faced by certain types of countries.

54. The United Nations system played an essential role in promoting development and assisting countries in combating the effects of the economic and financial crisis. In addition, it was responsible for coordinating those processes and ensuring that the measures agreed upon were implemented and reviewed in a timely, inclusive, voluntary and transparent manner. However, implementation of the Agenda went beyond the limits of a single agency, fund or programme, and the entire United Nations system should be involved so as to strengthen the impact of its operational activities for development. In addition, effective mechanisms should be established to ensure implementation, evaluation, follow-up and accountability.

55. While her delegation welcomed the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, that process and the mandates of funds and programmes on the ground should remain voluntary. The mandates, authority and characteristics of each entity, including their areas of specialization and capacity to mobilize resources for programme execution, should be respected; however, the task of implementing the 2030 Agenda should involve the entire United Nations system and should not be monopolized by certain parts of that system. In that regard, Cuba rejected the priority given to certain Sustainable Development Goals to the detriment of others, as well as their use for political ends.

56. Core resources were the cornerstone of United Nations operational activities and the only guarantee that the needs and priorities of beneficiary countries would be properly met. Steps must therefore be taken to address the growing imbalance between core and non-core resources, which was a major cause of the lack of coherence in operational activities. Her delegation was also concerned at the use of South-South cooperation by developed countries as a way of circumventing their commitment to allocate 0.7 per

cent of their gross national income to official development assistance. Although South-South cooperation remained a viable option for promoting development initiatives, it could not be a substitute for North-South cooperation.

57. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review would be a good opportunity to reaffirm the principles that guided the activities of the United Nations system in countries and to strengthen its intergovernmental nature and its strictly development-related objective. The system should be increasingly proactive in eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development, and more responsive to the national strategies and priorities of the countries of the South. Institutions should be able to draw on increasing, predictable and non-conditional resources to promote socioeconomic development on a neutral basis, at the request of national Governments and with respect for national sovereignty.

58. **Mr. Motter** (Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the 2030 Agenda clearly acknowledged the role of parliament in implementing the new Agenda and in deepening ownership of the Agenda by the people themselves. A change was therefore required in how the United Nations development system would work in countries going forward. Parliament should be acknowledged as a distinct partner separate from the executive branch, civil society and the private sector. There had been much talk about involving the private sector and civil society as partners but parliaments were also key.

59. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review should include a clear mandate for country teams and the United Nations development system to work with parliaments. To that end, there should be an identifiable focal point in each country team responsible for managing relations with parliaments and ensuring coordination on the United Nations side, and a work plan should be devised for collaboration with parliaments. In addition, clearly earmarked resources were needed to assist parliaments, which, in many countries, were underresourced and therefore not fully informed about processes under way in their country, lacking the information that was required for them to do their work as legislators and as representatives of the people.

60. The United Nations development system should help to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals through national parliaments by providing assistance in reviewing their institutional capacities, providing independent data analysis and information to parliaments, supporting the drafting of legislation, facilitating parliamentary engagement in national sustainable development plans and providing citizen feedback to parliamentarians on the delivery and impact of Sustainable Development Goals on the ground.

61. **Mr. Axerup** (Sweden) said that the key to cooperation among United Nations entities and between those entities and other development actors was successful partnerships. The United Nations played an exceptional role in generating, facilitating, leveraging and participating in partnerships at the national, regional and global levels, and that role would remain vital as its development system worked towards the shared delivery of development results in line with the 2030 Agenda. At the country level, partnerships must be aligned with national development strategies and circumstances to ensure national ownership and inclusion of the most relevant development actors in each country.

62. In order for the United Nations development system to be able to deliver integrated support to programme countries, the role of the resident coordinators should be strengthened and more authority should be given to resident coordinator offices. In addition, the recruitment process for resident coordinators should be modified to better match the characteristics of the mission. In particular, the mandates of resident coordinator offices needed to be strong enough to enable them to efficiently coordinate the efforts of the United Nations development system at the country level and ensure that its capacities were maximized.

63. Until Member States reached agreement on what the functions of the United Nations development system should be, it would be impossible to determine what changes should be made to policies and instruments in support of delivery of shared results at country level. The changes required would need to be considered in the light of the new functions that the system would inevitably have to assume in order to meet the demands of the 2030 Agenda. However, it was clear that the United Nations would need to do less and enable more. Lastly, an increase in core funding was vital if the United Nations development system was to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. His delegation

therefore looked forward to an in-depth discussion of the funding architecture.

64. **Ms. Fladby** (Observer for Norway) said that the issue of core funding had been discussed for many years but nothing had happened. Her delegation wondered what Member States could do to ensure that core funding was increased. Further discussions were needed on the principle of burden sharing. While core funding was very important, greater use should also be made of multi-partner trust funds, as another funding mechanism that could ensure that the United Nations worked in an integrated manner. With regard to the resident coordinator system, her delegation wondered whether it would be better to further improve that system or make more fundamental changes so that the resident coordinator functioned more like a chief executive officer than a coordinator.

65. **Mr. Higuchi** (Japan) said that, although it was primarily the role of the Governments of programme countries to coordinate the development activities of different stakeholders, the United Nations supported Governments through capacity-building. In addition, depending on the needs of programme countries, the Organization could be requested to play a bridging role between different stakeholders and the Government. The broad targets of the 2030 Agenda and the changing development landscape meant that the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders were playing a more prominent role in development, and the United Nations development system needed to promote the participation of those stakeholders and broaden its donor base. However, it was also important to avoid duplication and improve coordination between United Nations entities. To that end, the development system should set targets to indicate the level of coordination expected.

66. **Mr. Eichen** (Germany) said that a reform of the United Nations development system was needed and there should be a shift towards integration. His delegation wondered whether the focus of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the operational activities for development segment needed to change in the light of the ambitious new 2030 Agenda.

67. **Ms. Aitzhanova** (Minister of Economic Integration, Kazakhstan) said that reforms were painful but courage and political will at the highest level were needed. Her Government had recently implemented organizational reforms in response to criticism from the private sector and civil society. After a six-month analysis of the functions of each ministry, duplicated functions had been eliminated and the number of ministries had been reduced from 17 to 12. In addition, some services had been outsourced to the private sector and functions had been decentralized from the Cabinet to the ministries.

68. The United Nations development system needed to reflect a healthy balance of experience in Government, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations. As a result, it was important that junior programme officers who joined the United Nations in the early stages of their career did not end their career in the United Nations system. United Nations staff in the field could be relevant to the work of Governments only if they had multidimensional expertise.

69. **Mr. Kamau** (Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations) said that a clearing house was needed to examine all the ideas and prioritize what should come first in implementing the changes necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda. If the leadership was going to come from the top then the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination would need to take on that role and provide direction to Headquarters for the reform. Whatever was decided, the division of labour must be agreed upon to ensure a coherent approach to the reform.

70. The 2030 Agenda was universal and development challenges were being faced by all countries, not just the countries of the South. As a result, international organizations must respond to all countries collectively. At the same time, however, resources should not be taken away from development assistance to drive priorities in countries that should be able to fund their own engagement with international organizations.

71. **Mr. Clos** (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)) said that there was a need for change, especially at the senior level at Headquarters, and core funding must be increased. The decision to increase core resources would come from Member States but the Organization also needed to demonstrate high levels of efficiency and performance in order for Member States to be able to justify such funding increases to their constituents.

72. The resident coordinator system was a good system but improvements were needed. If the system worked well enough, there should not be a need to have resident staff for every programme. Decisions needed to be taken about the reporting lines for resident coordinators and their duties and terms of reference so that they could represent all United Nations agencies equally, even those not present on the ground. The Organization needed to draw on both generalists and specialists, and a matrix organization structure would ensure efficiency.

73. **Mr. Noudéhou** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in China) said that the full engagement of Member States was needed. The United Nations development system was owned by Member States and services were delivered to Member States as clients. Small island developing States and middle-income countries would approach the Sustainable Development Goals differently, and the way in which results were measured would also vary between countries. The United Nations therefore needed to work with Member States to find appropriate solutions.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.